COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Colchester, CT

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, January 10, 2023
6:00 PM
ZOOM

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Alexander Oliphant, Vice-Chair Mary Tomasi, Secretary Margo Gignac, Donna Antonacci, Rosemary Gignac, Michelle Millington, Christopher Rivers

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Daniel P. Sullivan, III, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Charles E. Hewes, Bacon Academy Principal Amy Begué

OTHERS PRESENT: Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk Heather Petit, Student Board Members Brooke Dean and Ryan Moores

1. MEETING OPENING

1.1 Call to Order

Chair Oliphant called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM

1.2 Roll Call

Chair Oliphant conducted a roll call of the Board.

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Oliphant led the Board and attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

5.1 Student Board Member Report

Ryan Moores gave a report on student activities that occurred in December and January as well as upcoming events. They included:

- Eighth graders visited Bacon Academy to take a tour and ask questions of students and teachers.
- Spirit week was held at Bacon Academy before the holidays.
- Annual National Honor Society (NHS) Harrington Court fundraiser. Community members brought in items (toys, blankets, etc), and NHS students wrapped them and distributed them to Harrington Court residents.
- Student Council held a toiletry drive for the Colchester Food Bank.
- Semester 1 Capstone Projects will be presented at 6:00 PM on January 18, 2023
- PJs and Prep night will be held on January 19, 2023. Students can come to Bacon

Academy and study the night before midterms; refreshments will be served.
- Drama Club will hold auditions for Pride and Prejudice on January 23, 2023.

5.2 District Update from the Superintendent

Superintendent Sullivan thanked the Board and community again for welcoming him to the district. Mr. Sullivan has met with principals, directors, and visited schools during his first week. Mr. Sullivan said he is working on the budget and on staying within Board of Finance guidelines. Mr. Sullivan thanked Chair Alex Oliphant and Secretary Margo Gignac for their support and guidance thus far.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

3.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct

Samantha Van Zilen and Jennifer Cox welcomed Superintendent Sullivan to Colchester and stated it would be helpful to have Board meetings on the Town of Colchester website.

4. *PRIORITY DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

4.1 *Preschool and Grade 3 Wonders Curriculum

Dr. Charles Hewes, Assistant Superintendent, gave an overview of the preschool curriculum revision. The vision for preschool includes building self-regulatory and social emotional skills, building foundational academic skills, hands-on learning experiences, and individualized and differentiated instruction.

Dr. Hewes discussed the Wonders preschool program and its benefits which include thematic units, focus on literacy, social-emotional learning supports, and differentiated materials.

Dr. Hewes reported that the state recently passed legislation in regard to K-3 reading programs. Colchester currently implements the Wonders ELA program in grades K-2 and would be looking to extend that curriculum program into Grade 3.

The cost of the 6-year option of the Wonders program for preschool is $23,551 (paid by Esser 2 grant) and the 6-year option of the Wonders program for Grade 3 is $49,000 (paid by ARPA grant). Neither program would have any impact on the current budget or next year's budget.

Ms. Gignac and Donna Antonacci requested more time and more information in regard to the current Wonders program before voting to adopt. Dr. Hewes stated he would like to purchase the program as it is mandated through legislation and would give time to get the materials into the hands of teachers.

Superintendent Sullivan said there is a risk that they will not be able to utilize the monies allocated from the grant for the purchases and recommended the Board authorized two or three members of the Board of Education to serve on a literacy subcommittee to meet with Dr. Hewes and Ms. O'Meara in regard to the program and that the Board authorized the committee to determine if the materials could be purchased.

Motion by: M.Gignac
To form an ad-hoc committee for the review of the preschool and literacy programs and that committee has the authority to approve such programs.
Second: **R.Gignac**
Discussion: The ad-hoc committee members will be Alex Oliphant, Mary Tomasi and Donna Antonacci
Roll Call: M.Tomasi, C.Rivers, R.Gignac, M.Gignac, M.Millington, D.Antonacci, A.Oliphant
Vote: Unanimous

4.2 *School Calendar for 2023-2024
Motion by: M.Tomasi
To approve the school calendar for 2023-2024 as presented
Second: M.Gignac
Roll Call: R.Gignac, M.Gignac, D.Antonacci, C.Rivers, M. Tomasi, M.Millington, A.Oliphant
Vote: Unanimous

4.3 *Participation of Non-Colchester Public School Students in Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Activities

Superintendent Sullivan recommended that the Board consider when it is appropriate and possibly problematic, as well as any unintended consequences (i.e. impact it might have on current Colchester Public School students) when considering non-Colchester Public School students participation in activities. Mr. Sullivan recommended that a few board members meet with school staff, administration, et al. to discuss the matter further.

Motion by: M.Gignac
To form an ad-hoc committee to review the participation of non-Colchester Public School students in extracurricular and co-curricular activities and to set guidelines and bring those guidelines back to the full board.
Second: C. Rivers
Roll Call: M.Gignac, D.Antonacci, M.Tomasi, M.Millington, R.Gignac, C.Rivers, A.Oliphant
Vote: Unanimous

Members of the committee are to include Margo Gignac, Alexander Oliphant and Rosemary Gignac

4.4 *BA Robotics Field Trip to West Springfield, MA
Motion by: M.Gignac
To approve the Bacon Academy Robotics field trip to Western New England University
Second: R.Gignac
Roll Call: D.Antonacci, M.Tomasi, M.Millington, C.Rivers, R.Gignac, M.Gignac, A.Oliphant
Vote: Unanimous

4.5 *BA Robotics Field Trip to Springfield, MA
Motion by: M.Tomasi
To approve the Bacon Academy Robotics field trip to West Springfield, MA
Second: D.Antonacci
Roll Call: M.Gignac, M.Tomasi, R.Gignac, M.Millington, D.Antonacci, C.Rivers, A.Oliphant
Vote: Unanimous

4.6 Policy 9321 Time, Place and Notice of Meetings
First reading; no action taken

Discussion was had in regard to the posting of meetings on the Town website. Heather Petit stated the concern was not having access to the website calendar on the Town website and that any change in dates, times or meetings (i.e. canceling, posting of Special Meetings, et al.) could not be done by the Superintendent's office. This could potentially make the Board non-compliant with the Freedom of Information Act. Superintendent Sullivan recommended an alternative would be to ask the town to post a link to the Board of Education meetings page on their website. The Board agreed this would be helpful.

4.7 *Discussion and Possible Action on Colchester Federation of Teachers Contract (Discussion proposed for executive session)

Motion by: M. Tomasi
To enter into executive session in regard to the Colchester Federation of Teachers contract inviting Superintendent Daniel P. Sullivan, III and Dr. Charles Hewes
Second: M. Millington
Roll Call: M. Gignac, R.Gignac, D.Antonacci, C.Rivers, M.Millington, A.Oliphant
Vote: Unanimous

Entered executive session at 7:25 PM.

Returned to public session at 7:38 PM

Motion by: M.Tomasi
To approve the three-year July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026 contract with Colchester Federation of Teachers contract Local #1827, American Federation of Teachers
Second: R.Gignac
Roll Call: C.Rivers, D. Antonacci, R. Gignac, M.Gignac, M.Tomasi, A.Oliphant; (M.Millington had not returned from Executive Session at time of vote but stated she agreed upon return)
Vote: Unanimous

5. *CONTINUED DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

5.1 *Board of Education Meeting Dates for 2023

Motion by: M.Millington

To approve the Board of Education 2023 meeting schedule
Second: M.Gignac
Roll Call: M.Gignac, M.Millington, R.Gignac, C.Rivers, M.Tomasi, D.Antonacci, A.Oliphant
Vote: Unanimous

6. *CONSENT AGENDA

6.1 *Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2022

Motion by: C. Rivers
To approve the Board of Education Regular Meeting minutes of December 13, 2022
Second: M.Tomasi
Roll Call: C.Rivers, M.Millington, M.Tomasi, D.Antonacci, M.Gignac, R.Gignac, A.Oliphant
Vote: Unanimous

6.2 *BA Career and Technical Education Materials Removal Request - Photo Development Tables and Metal Foundry

Motion by: D.Antonacci
To approve the Bacon Academy Career and Technical Education materials removal request
Second: C.Rivers
Roll Call: C.Rivers, M.Millington, M.Tomasi, D.Antonacci, M.Gignac, R.Gignac, A.Oliphant
Vote: Unanimous

7. REPORTS FROM BOARD LIAISONS

7.1 Reports from Board Liaisons

Town Board and Commissions
Board of Selectmen: Donna Antonacci reported that the injunction had been lifted and the town would be moving forward with the senior center project. The project was awarded to BRD builders.

Board of Finance: Christopher Rivers reported that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 11, 2023. At the last meeting, Mr. Rivers and Business Director, Rachel Linkkila, answered questions in regard to the budget process and schedule.

P&R Parent Commission: None.

PTO Collaborative: None.

C3 Collaborative: Rosemary Gignac reported that C3 was working in partnership with CES and JJIS on attendance. The kindergarteners visited Cragin Library and saw a puppet show and participated in a library card registration event. They will be hosting a family night on April 20, 2023.

Youth & Social Services: Michelle Millington reported they met last week. They had great success with the Resolution Run. An informational meeting on internet safety will be held

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at Town Hall on Thursday, January 12, 2023; this will be a hybrid meeting. Youth and Social Services will be moving forward in working to get funding regarding vaping detectors for the high school.

Commission on Aging: None.

Board of Education Liaisons
Personnel: None.
Policy: None.
Curriculum: None.
Budget: None.

8. BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION ITEMS

8.1 Next Meetings

Next meeting will be held on January 24, 2023.

8.2 Enrollment Report

The current enrollment for the district is 2,270 students. Superintendent Sullivan reported that elementary enrollment continues to grow. He will be looking into a NESDEC membership for the district. NESDEC offers historical five-year enrollment projections.

8.3 Notices of Retirement/Resignation

Krista Kennedy

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

9.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct

Samantha VanZilen thanked the Board for looking into putting a link to the Board of Education meetings page on the town website.

Jennifer Cox thanked Dr. Hewes for his expertise on curriculum and thanked Board members for postponing the vote so they could obtain more information. Ms. Cox reiterated that she would like to have a link on the town website to the meetings.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Oliphant adjourned the meeting at 8:08 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Heather R. Petit
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk

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